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Part of an international series of amply illustrated, colorful, small size books for children ages 5 to 10, this volume is designed to enhance learning and serve as an educational resource. The text describes aspects of the lives and customs of the people of ancient Egypt. The topics covered include the family, food, clothing, homes, agriculture, the writing system, the pharaoh, and the building of the pyramids. (NL)

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On the Banks of the Pharaoh's Nile

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On the Banks of the Pharaoh's Nile

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If you go to museums like the Field Museum in Chicago, or the Metropolitan in New York, you will see some of the Ancient Egyptian objects which have been rescued from the sand.

It is very hot in Egypt. Most of the country is sandy desert, where rain hardly ever falls, nothing can grow, and no one can live.

Desert animals: scarab beetle, scorpion, vulture; gazelle, lion and viper. A scorpion sting can kill a small child.

Egypt is in Northeast Africa.

The Nile valley is shown in green.

But there is a huge river, the Nile, which flows through the desert for 4,000 miles. The Ancient Egyptians live along the riverbank. The river gives them water, and makes the ground damp for crops. In the summer, the sun becomes so hot it seems everything will burn up. But then the Nile swells with water and overflows its banks into the valley. Three months later, it goes down.

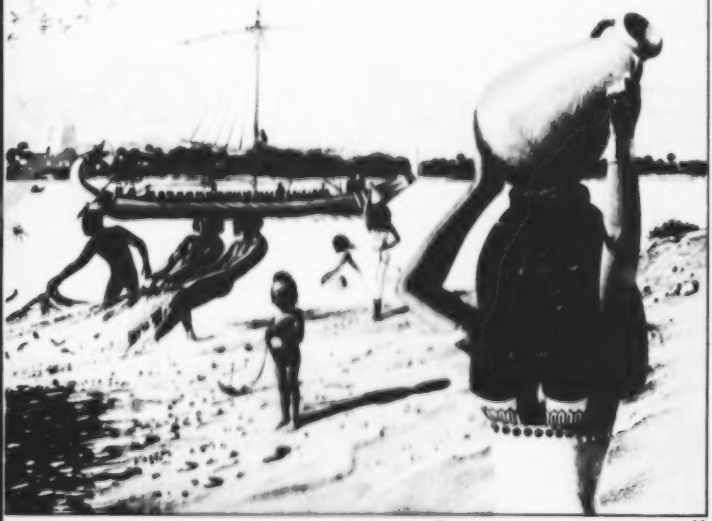
In summer the valley is flooded. The river brings thick, fertile mud which it leaves along the banks as it goes down.

In winter, the river stays in its bed. In the rich, water-soaked soil of the valley, plants can grow.

themselves very light small boats from the papyrus reeds which grow along the riverbank. The pharaoh and his court travel in beautiful painted boats with rows and rows of oars.

Hunters kill ducks and geese with throwing sticks a little like boomerangs.

mullet eggs. But there are crocodiles in the river too, and hippopotami. They can sometimes tip over a boat and sink it. Noblemen enjoy going out on hippopotamus hunts with ropes and harpoons. And on the riverbank there are cobras — their bite can kill!



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The crown of the Northern Kingdom

The crown of the Southern Kingdom

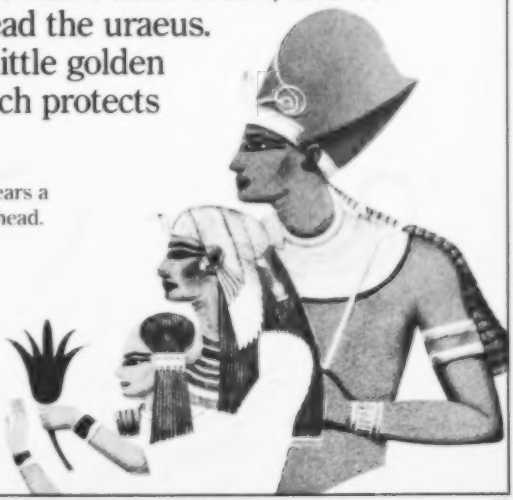
The crown of Egypt

The pharaoh is a very powerful king. The Egyptians believe that he is the son of the sun, and that he has supernatural powers. They call him God-King. What does he look like? Around the temples are huge statues of the pharaohs, like the one in the picture on the left. Often he wears a headcloth over his wig: the nemes. On his chin he has a false beard, and on his forehead the uraeus. This is a little golden cobra which protects the king.

The pharaoh wears a kepresh on his head.

The queen

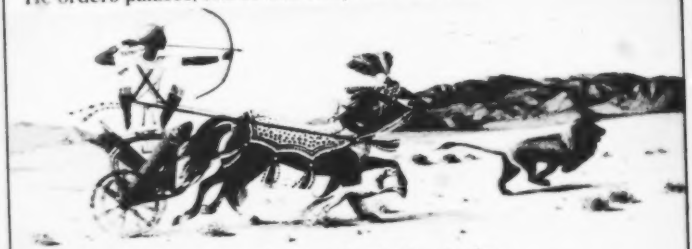
The prince is holding a lotus flower.



There are crowds of servants to wait on the pharaoh.

Friendly nations bring expensive presents for him.

He orders palaces, tombs and temples to be built.



The pharaoh likes to go lion hunting in his chariot.

Egypt is a rich land, and Egyptians are content to stay within its borders. But then they move further afield, becoming known as top **warriors.**

Prisoners

Under the pharaohs they conquer a great empire, from Syria to the Sudan. The army is huge and well trained. **Prisoners of war** are used as servants, or in gold mines or stone quarries.

As wars go on, the Egyptians begin to lose — first to the powerful Nubians and then the Persians. Later the Greeks, then the Romans, cross the sea to do battle. In time, the mighty Egyptians are overrun. And sand will cover the temples.

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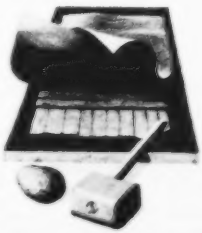
The Egyptians write in hieroglyphics.

Scribes help the pharaoh. They are very important, because they can read and write. They are sent all over Egypt to keep watch over the harvests and the building of the temples. Occasionally they make expeditions into the desert to bring back precious metals and jewels.

How can you become a scribe? By learning to read, write and count. You start on clay tablets, then, when you are good enough, you can write with pen and ink on a fine roll of **papyrus,** or paper. Because it rolls up it is easy to carry around and store.



Papyrus is a plant which grows near the Nile. The stalk is trimmed, then stripped and flattened to make paper.

After the floods, the fields are sown. Cattle are led over the fields to tread the seeds deep into the mud.

The fields need water from the Nile to grow crops. The farmers use a 'shadoof.' It's a pole with a bucket on one end and a weight on the other end. The pole swings around from the river and tips water into the **irrigation canals.** Harvests are rich in Egypt. On the next page you see a scribe. He watches the harvest and notes the size of the crop.

Hoe

Carpenter's tool

Knife Awl

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The Egyptians wear a lot of makeup. They put black kohl all around their eyes to protect them from the glare of the sun.

They love going up on to the flat roofs of their houses to chat in the cool of the evening.

What do the Egyptians wear?
The men wear a linen skirt, the women a long linen dress, while the children often don't wear anything at all. Rich Egyptians wear heavy wigs to show how important they are. The women's wigs are longer than the men's and have turquoise or gold beads braided into the ends.

Mirror

Makeup spoon

Bracelet

Sandals

What are their houses like? They are built of mud bricks, then painted in bright colors. They have flat roofs, often with silos on them to store the grain. In the gardens, papyrus and sycamores grow around a pool.
The Egyptians love cats. They train them to go hunting. A lot of cats are even mummified after they die.

Look at these household objects.
They're not very different from ours...

Egyptians eat their meals sitting around a low table. They sit on the ground or on low stools. They drink beer out of cups, and don't use plates. Everyone just picks what they want out of the dish with their fingers. What do they eat? Mostly fish, onions and bread, but also birds, beef, lettuce, lentils, cucumbers, dates... The Egyptians make things out of wood: chairs, tables, and wooden headrests which they use as pillows. The rich have ornate beds with carved legs. They have beautiful jewelry made from gold and precious stones.

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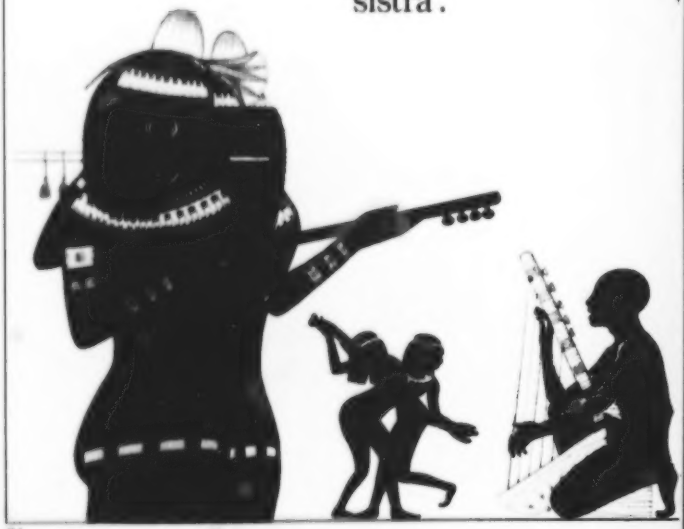
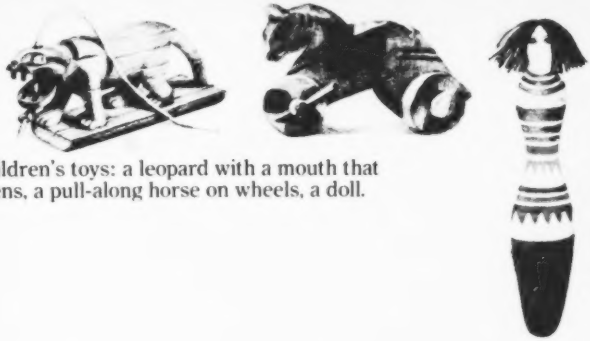
The Egyptians love family life. They particularly like playing games together: dice, knuckle-bones, checkers, and a game like Parchesi called 'senet'.

The very rich arrange splendid feasts for their friends. On their heads they wear cones of scented grease which melt and drip down their faces, cooling them pleasantly as the party wears on! There is an orchestra, and dancers to amuse the guests. The musicians play the harp, the lute, and the flute. The dancers beat time with small rattles called 'sistra'.





Children's toys: a leopard with a mouth that opens, a pull-along horse on wheels, a doll.

Boys and girls prefer more active games: shooting arrows at targets, wrestling, or a game rather like our piggy-back. Little children have lovely toys made out of wood and fabric: spinning tops, balls, dolls, and animals on wheels to pull along.

A ball game

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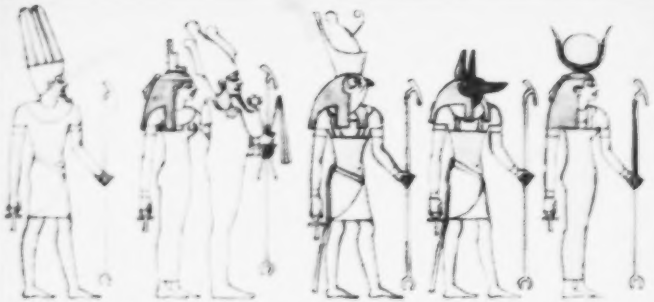
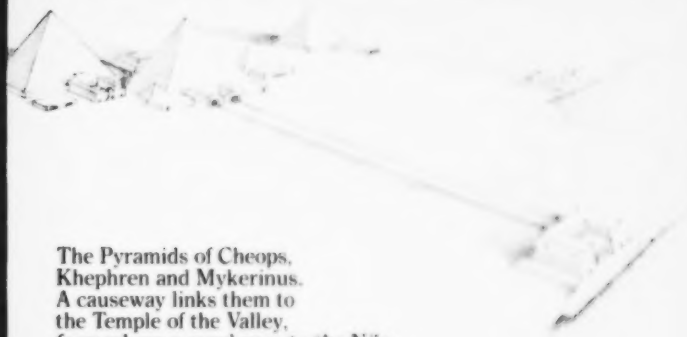


Who are all these people with animal heads or strange crowns? They are the gods who watch over the Egyptians. They each have their own great temples. Nobody is allowed in except the priests. Each god has his own statue deep in the most secret room of his temple. Sometimes, on feast days, the statues of the gods are carried out and the priests and people walk with them in long processions.

The two enormous stone needles standing at the front of the temple are called obelisks.

Have you heard of the Pyramids of Egypt? They stand in the desert, safely away from the Nile floods. They are gigantic tombs. Inside each pyramid is a maze of secret galleries leading to the room where the pharaoh's mummy in its coffin lies hidden.

Pyramid of Cheops:
1. Chamber of the King
2. Treasure room
3. An unfinished chamber
4. Great gallery
5. Air shaft



The Pyramids of Cheops, Khephren and Mykerinus. A causeway links them to the Temple of the Valley, from where a canal goes to the Nile.

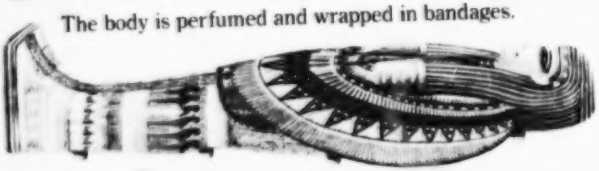
Next to the burial chamber are rooms filled with furniture, vases and precious things: **the pharaoh's treasures.** The pyramid has been designed so that it's almost impossible to get inside once the pharaoh has been buried. The entrance is hidden and the galleries leading to the king's burial chamber are blocked off to stop graverobbers. The tallest Egyptian pyramid of all is the tomb of Cheops: it measures 480 feet in height.

It can take over thirty years to build a pyramid. First the stone has to be brought in. Some stones are close by in the desert, but others, like granite, have to come from quarries far away. The stone has to be loaded onto boats and floated down the Nile. Then the stones are dragged on rollers to the place where the pyramid is to be built.

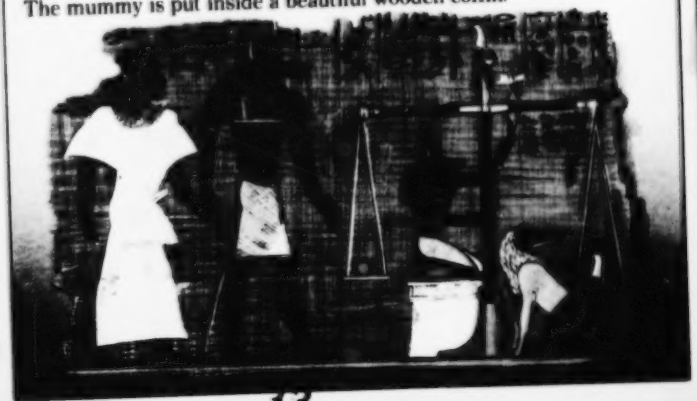
Some of the blocks of stone weigh over twenty tons, and without having any cranes it seems impossible to get them up to build the pyramid walls. So the Egyptians make huge ramps of brick all around the pyramid. Then the stone can be hauled right up to the top. The pharaoh makes the peasants do this sort of work. The pyramids rose up into the sky, showing the greatness of the dead pharaoh — and of the living Egypt.

When somebody dies, the body is embalmed to preserve it and stop it from decaying. A body preserved like this is called a mummy.

The body is perfumed and wrapped in bandages.



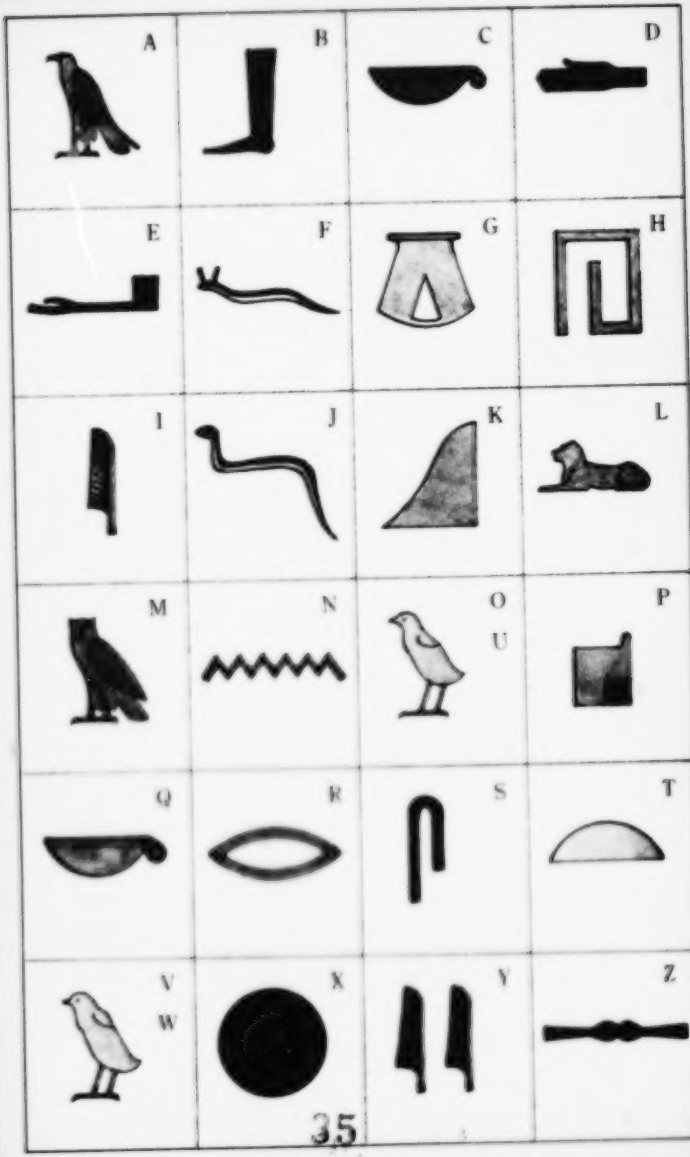
The mummy is put inside a beautiful wooden coffin.



In the desert, there are tombs dug out of the mountainsides. They are like real houses, with lots of rooms. The Ancient Egyptians believe there is a life after death. So that the dead person will be happy in the land of the dead, the walls are painted with pictures of the Nile, and of the animals and people living along its banks. The rooms are filled with beautiful furniture and 'shabtis' are put all around the mummy. What are shabtis? They are little statues of servants for the dead person. The most thoughtful provide three hundred and sixty-five shabtis — one for each day of the year!

◀ The dead live in another world, protected by the god Anubis and ruled over by Osiris.

To get to the desert, where the dead are buried, the bodies have to be carried across the Nile.



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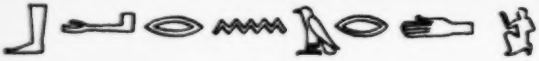

Writing with pictures.
Egyptian writing was done with little drawings — of plants, animals or signs. Put together these drawings are called **hieroglyphics.** Archaeologists found these drawings carved on the walls of temples and on statues. Others were on papyrus or painted on walls of tombs.

What do they mean?
For almost 2,000 years it was a mystery. One day a stone was found, with three kinds of writing on it. One was hieroglyphics. By comparing the words with the drawings we learned what they meant. The mystery was over! Each drawing was a letter!

If you were a girl, your name would be followed by the picture of a woman; a boy's name was followed by the picture of a man.

Thus Horus, son of Isis,
Saith to divine Osiris,
"O Father, I have brought to thee
This vindicated spirit.

"His deeds have been adjudged,
His heart weighed in the Balance;
Grant him thy cakes and ale, and grant
Him welcome in thy presence."

From the Book of the Dead
About 3,500 B.C.

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Books of Discovery for children five through ten...

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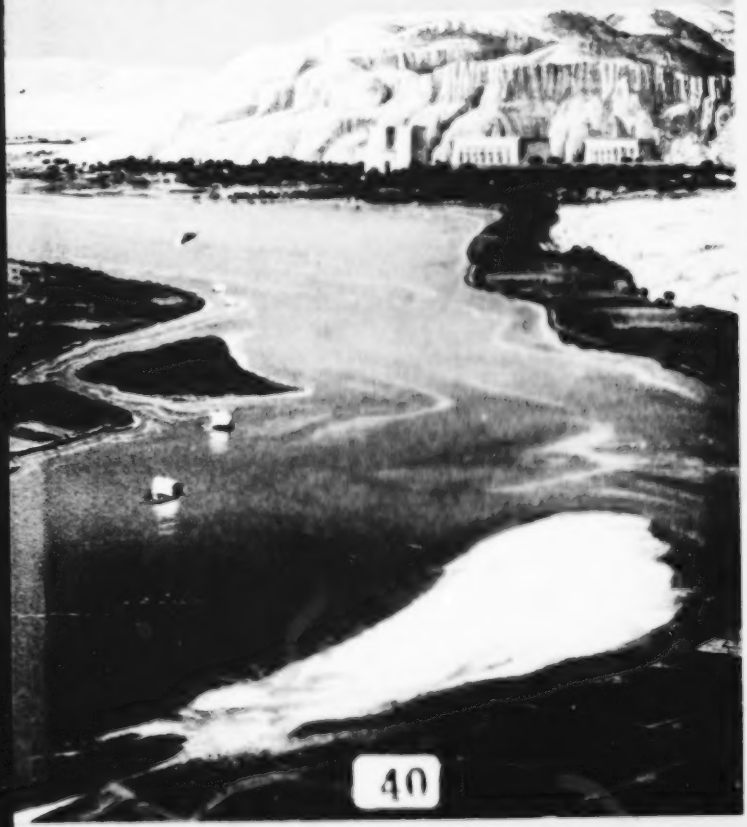
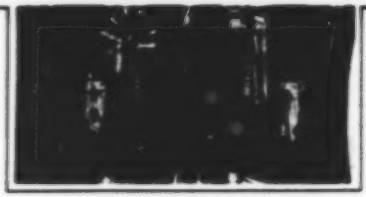
Each title in the series is an education on the subject covered: a collaboration among the author, the illustrator, an advisory group of elementary school teachers and an academic specialist on the subject.

The goal is to respond to the endless curiousity of children, to fascinate and educate.





On the Banks of the Pharaoh's Nile
illustrated by Christian Broutin

- How do we know about the Ancient Egyptians?
- Why was the River Nile so important to the Egyptians?
- Who was the pharaoh?

- What toys did the children have?
- What is a mummy?
- How were the Pyramids built?
- How can you read hieroglyphics?

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